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ABSTRACT

This study investigated differences between the classroom management styles of teachers who were certified via a traditional university teacher training program and those participating in an alternative certification (AC) program. The study was also designed to further substantiate the construct validity of the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory. Respondents were 228 teachers from a Regional Service Center AC program and from traditional university graduate-level courses. The AC program required all participants to be currently teaching full-time in public K-12 classrooms. Their teaching experience was further augmented by coursework that was more utilitarian than theory-driven. Data were collected from the teachers using the ABCC and a demographic questionnaire. Researchers examined each of the subscales of the ABCC inventory (instructional management, people management, and behavior management) and analyzed the data via a series of t-tests. Results indicated that only the instructional management subscale of the ABCC inventory yielded significant differences. The scores on the instructional management subscale of the ABCC of teachers participating in the AC program indicated that they were significantly more interventionist than teachers in the traditional program. (Contains 23 references.) (SM)

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Beliefs Regarding Classroom Management Style: Differences Between Traditional and Alternative Certification Teachers

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Abstract

The number of states permitting alternative teacher certification (AC) programs has mushroomed in recent years--from 18 in 1986 to 41 in 1996 (Shen, 1997). One of the primary areas of concern expressed by teachers who are learning to teach is classroom management (Johns, MacNaughton, & Karabinus, 1989; Long & Frye, 1989; Weinstein, 1996; Weinstein & Mignano (1993; Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967). The primary objective of this study was to investigate differences between the classroom management style of teachers who were certified via a traditional university teacher training program and those participating in an alternative certification (AC) program.

Data were collected from a total of 228 teachers via the Attitudes & Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) and a demographic questionnaire. Subjects were drawn from a Regional Service Center Alternative Teacher Certification (AC) Program and from university graduate level courses. This AC program required all participants to be currently teaching (full-time) in public K-12 classrooms. Their teaching experience was further augmented by coursework that was more utilitarian than theory driven

Data were collected on each of the 3 sub-scales of the ABCC Inventory (Instructional Management, People Management, & Behavior Management) and analyzed via a series of t-tests. Only one sub-scale, Instructional Management, yielded significance.

Beliefs Regarding Classroom Management Style: Differences Between Traditional and Alternative Certification Teachers

Bradshaw (1998) has defined alternative certification (AC) as " . . . a method of entry into the teaching profession that does not require completion of a traditional teacher education program" (p. 4). Such programs became more appealing during the 1980s educational reform movement and have mushroomed in recent years--from 18 in 1986 to 41 in 1996 (Dill, 1996; Feistritzer, 1997; Shen, 1997). There appears to be three general groups of AC programs: those linked to graduate study and internships; those that provide at least some professional preparation prior to the beginning of classroom teaching; and (a few) that allow participants to commence teaching with no previous preparation (Bradshaw, 1998).

AC programs are controversial; there are strong arguments both for and against them. Compared to traditional teacher preparation programs, AC programs target a different audience. AC programs have been shown to attract more minority candidates with degrees in shortage areas (i.e.: mathematics and science) to inner city schools (Feistritzer, 1997; Shen, 1998). Participants of such programs are also likely to be older than typical beginning teachers and have experienced other career, thus enriching the traditional school climate. On the other hand, research suggests that the pedagogical knowledge (typically included in traditional teacher preparation programs) is a necessary component for quality instruction. Therefore, a primary concern is that educators " . . . who are certified alternatively have more difficulties learning to teach than those certified traditionally" (Shen, 1997, p. 277). One of the primary areas of concern expressed by is classroom management (Johns, MacNaughton, & Karabinus, 1989; Long & Frye, 1989; Weinstein, 1996; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993; Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967). It would be interesting to consider the differences in the attitudes and beliefs of those teachers certified by alternative means (in which there is a heavy field based component) and traditionally certified (TC) teachers.

Although often used interchangeably, the terms *classroom management* and *discipline* are not synonymous. *Discipline* typically refers to the structures and rules for student behavior and

efforts to ensure that students comply with those rules. *Classroom management*, on the other hand, is a broader, umbrella term describing teacher efforts to oversee a multitude of activities in the classroom including learning, social interaction, and student behavior. Thus, classroom management includes, but is not limited to, discipline concerns.

Within this study, classroom management was defined as a multi-faceted construct that includes three broad dimensions -- instructional management, people management, and behavior management. Dimension one, instructional management, includes monitoring seatwork, structuring daily routines, and allocating materials. The manner in which these tasks are managed contributes to the general classroom atmosphere and classroom management style (Burden, 1995; Kounin, 1970; McNeely & Mertz, 1990; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993). The people management dimension pertains to what teachers believe about students as persons and what teachers do to enable them to develop. A large body of literature indicates that academic achievement and productive behavior are influenced by the quality of the teacher-student relationship (Burden, 1995; Glasser, 1986; Ginott, 1972; Gordon, 1974; Jones & Jones, 1990; Evertson, Emmer, Clements, & Worsham, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). As Weinstein (1996) explains, " . . . teachers are good when they take the time to learn who their students are and what they are like, . . . when they laugh with their students, . . . and when they are both a friend and a responsible adult" (p. 76). The third dimension, behavior management, is similar to, but different than, discipline in that it focuses on planned means of preventing misbehavior rather than the teacher's reaction to it. Specifically, this facet includes setting rules, establishing a reward structure, and providing opportunities for student input.

Wolfgang and Glickman (1980, 1986) conceptualized a framework to explain teacher beliefs toward child development. Based on a combination of psychological interpretations, their continuum illustrates three approaches to classroom interaction--non-interventionists, interventionists, and interactionalists. The non-interventionist presupposes the child has an inner drive that needs to find its expression in the real world. Proponents of Eric Berne (1964), Thomas Harris (1967) (transactional analysis), Haim Ginott (1972) (congruent communication), or Thomas

Gordon (1974) (teacher effectiveness training) are considered non-interventionists. At the opposite end of the continuum are interventionists--those who emphasize what the outer environment does to the human organism to cause it to develop in its particular way. Traditional behavior modification provides the theoretical foundation for this school of thought. Models of classroom management such as those developed by Lee Canter (1992), Fredric Jones (1987), or James Dobson (1992) are examples of the interventionist approach.

Midway between these two extremes, interactionalists focus on what the individual does to modify the external environment as well as what the environment does to shape him or her. Theories developed by Alfred Adler, Rudolph Dreikurs, and William Glasser provide the framework for interactionalist ideology (Wolfgang, 1995). Cooperative Discipline (Albert, 1989) and Judicious Discipline (Gathercoal, 1990) are both examples of classroom management models that exemplify interactionalist ideology.

The assumption is that teachers believe and act according to all three models of discipline, but one usually predominates in beliefs and actions (Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980, 1986; Wolfgang, 1995). Therefore, the application of these various theories emphasizes teacher behaviors that reflect the corresponding degrees of power possessed by student and teacher.

Methods

The primary objective of this study was to investigate differences between the classroom management style of teachers who were certified via a traditional university teacher training program and those participating in an alternative certification (AC) program. Research efforts to explore the effects of classroom management on the educational environment and instructional effectiveness are limited, however, by the quality of instruments presently available to measure perceptions of classroom management style. Therefore, a second objective of the study was to further substantiate the construct validity of the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory.

Instrumentation

The Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory, an instrument designed to measure teachers' perceptions of their classroom management beliefs and practices consists of 26 Likert format statements and three scales: Instructional Management; People Management; Behavior Management (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998). A four-category response scale for each item was used. Beliefs were classified on the continuum originally suggested by Wolfgang and Glickman (1980, 1986) that reflects the degree of teacher power over students. Higher scores are indicative of more interventionist (controlling) ideology.

The ABCC Inventory has been shown to be a reliable, valid instrument useful in the empirical examination of classroom management styles (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998). Previous research on the concurrent validity of the ABCC Inventory shows the 3 scales are related to selected personality traits of teachers. Reliability coefficients for the three scales were .82, .69, and .69 for Instructional Management, People Management, Behavior Management scales, respectively. (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998).

Subjects

Data were collected from a total of 228 teachers via the ABCC and a demographic questionnaire in the spring semester. Subjects were drawn from a local Regional Service Center Alternative Teacher Certification (AC) Program and from university graduate level courses.

The majority of subjects (approximately 62%) were enrolled in the AC Program. Approximately 50% of the subject pool identified themselves as elementary level teachers, 28.5% taught at the middle school level, and 21.2% described themselves as high school level instructors. Participants ranged in age from 22 to 58 with the average age for the overall group being 35.1 years. The average age of those seeking AC was 34.8 years, compared to an average of 35.6 years for their traditionally certified counterparts.

Approximately one-third of the subject pool reported their primary classroom management training was in Assertive Discipline (33.3%); one-third, in Cooperative Discipline (37.3%). 21.9% reported receiving classroom management training in some other model of classroom

management training. Only a small portion of the group (7.5%) reported they had received no training in classroom management.

Study participants reported a range of years teaching experience from 1 to 26 years. As expected, those certified by traditional means reported more years of teaching experience, (M = 8.7 years) compared to AC subjects (M = 1.9 years). Ethnic composition of the subject pool was as follows: 7% African-American, 53% Caucasian, 36% Hispanic; 3.9% were of other ethnic origin. Approximately one-third of the subject pool was female (30.7%) and traditionally certified (37.7%).

AC programs vary across the U.S. in content, structure, and effectiveness (Shen, 1997). The program studied here required all participants to hold at least a bachelor's degree (with a minimum cumulative 2.5 g.p.a.). Those applicants who meet minimum academic entrance requirements are invited for an interview before official acceptance into the AC program. Program participants were also required to currently teach (full-time) in public K-12 classrooms. Their teaching experience was further augmented by 25 clock hours of classroom observation and coursework that was more utilitarian than theory driven. The bulk of the 25 hours of observation must be in the candidates teaching area and include five hours of "shadowing a teacher." All program participants were required to spend some of the 25 hours observing in special education (Influence the future, 1998).

Results

Data were analyzed using a series of t-tests. Analyses determined a significant difference between those teachers involved in the AC program and traditionally certified teachers on only one of the three ABCC sub-scales. Teachers participating in the AC teacher preparation program scored significantly more interventionist on the Instructional Management sub-scale of the ABCC. Neither the People Management nor the Behavior Management sub-scales yielded significant differences. (See Table 1.)

Table 1.

T-Test: Alternative vs. Traditionally Certified Teachers on the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory

Sub-scale	Group	Mean	SD	p
Instructional Management	Alternative	40.95	5.33	.019
	Traditional	39.16	5.89	
People Management	Alternative	21.99	3.68	.190
	Traditional	21.33	3.58	
Behavior Management	Alternative	11.42	2.27	.189
	Traditional	11.01	2.29	

Summary & Discussion

Alternative teacher certification programs were created for the expressed purpose of meeting the schools' immediate need to find teachers. Simultaneously, a relatively small percentage of teachers describe their traditional education courses as especially valuable in their preparation (Bradshaw, 1998). What began as a temporary means to address teacher shortages in a variety of areas, has become a viable--and for many a preferable--option to traditional teacher preparation programs. Not without controversy, Bradshaw (1998) explains some " . . . question the quality of teaching performance that can be expected of candidates who have not completed a teacher preparation program nor had an opportunity to develop the pedagogy which lies at the heart of traditional teacher education" (p. 2).

In addition, classroom management is considered one of the most enduring and widespread problems in education (Johns, MacNaughton, & Karabinus, 1989; Long & Frye, 1989; Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967). Although a large body of research exists on the subject of discipline, less has been done regarding the broader concept of classroom management. Beliefs regarding the nature of appropriate and inappropriate student behaviors and how to manage classrooms vary among teachers and can play an important role in the determination of teacher behavior (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967; Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980, 1986).

This study revealed few statistical differences between AC teachers and those prepared by traditional methods in regard to the facets of classroom management. AC teachers scored significantly more interventionist (controlling) on the Instructional Management scale than their traditional counterparts.

These results might be explained by the fact that AC teachers have less teaching experience than the traditional group, M = 1.9 years vs. 8.7 years, respectively. Few differences, if any, exist between the actual coursework preparing these two groups to teach. The coursework required in this particular AC program closely mirrors that of a traditional teacher preparation program at a local university. Even some of the faculty are the same. It seeems likely then, that management of the instructional environment can only come with time. It would be interesting to see if the AC teachers change as they gain professional experience.

Neither People Management nor Behavior Management scales yielded significant differences. As is typical in AC programs, participants were about the same age as experienced teachers and came to this profession from other careers. Hence, we can assume they are more mature and have a broader variety of life experiences than "typical" beginning teachers. How to build relationships with others (People Management) and how to act proactively in the classroom (Behavior Management) could come more easily to the type of person drawn to AC programs. These results could also be explained by the fact that the AC program is an intense immersion program. All AC program participants were currently teaching in their own classrooms.

As Alternative Teacher Certification Programs continue to increase in availability, they will inevitably create competition for university-housed teacher preparation programs. Our public school classrooms will increasingly be staffed by educators certified by alternative certification programs. Because AC teacher preparation programs are controversial and here to stay, it is particularly important to study them. Is there cause for concern regarding the quality of AC programs? Or could those of us in traditional teacher preparation programs learn from them? The answer is "yes" to both questions since AC programs vary in entrance requirements, content, and rigor (Shen, 1997). The bottom line questions should always and ultimately focus on the children

we serve: What impact does teacher training--traditional or otherwise--have on the students and their learning? What are the best methodologies for preparing preservice teachers and nurturing experienced ones? There can be little doubt this is a fruitful area for future study.

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